

### REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 11-15, 21-25, 31, 32, and 34-38 are currently pending. Claims 16-20, 26-30, and 33 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; Claim 31 has been amended; and Claims 34-38 have been added by the present amendment. The changes and additions to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, it is noted that Claim 31 has been amended to recite a “non-transitory” computer-readable storage medium to address U.S. Patent and Trademark Office formalities only. It is noted that the term “non-transitory” is a limitation of the medium itself (i.e., tangible, not a signal) as opposed to a limitation on data storage persistency (e.g., RAM vs. ROM).

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 11-15, 21-25, 31, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0050078 to Refuah et al. (hereinafter “Refuah”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0034631 to Julliard et al. (hereinafter “Julliard”).

### REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Previously presented Claim 1 is directed to an information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Figure 8 and the discussion related thereto in the originally filed specification.

search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means;

retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

transmission means for transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Office Action apparently acknowledges, and it is respectfully submitted, that Refuah fails to disclose the search means, retrieval means, and transmission means of Claim 1.<sup>2</sup> Rather, the Office Action cites Julliard for such teachings.

Julliard is directed to the field of web-based shared document repositories and document recommender systems. The Office Action apparently cites the Julliard recommender systems that learn their user's preferences and recommend items to users, by first matching users to each other and filtering, for teaching the claimed search means, retrieval means, and transmission means.

However, it is respectfully submitted that Julliard fails to disclose search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means. Rather, Julliard simply discusses the recommendation of items by first matching users and through filtering.<sup>3</sup> Julliard does not disclose the

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<sup>2</sup> See Office Action dated June 22, 2010, page 3.

<sup>3</sup> See Julliard, paragraphs [0005] and [0007].

***identification of a matching user associated with taste information having a resemblance to search key information.***

Further, Julliard fails to disclose retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user. Rather, as cited in the Office Action, Julliard simply discusses filtering search results.<sup>4</sup> Julliard does not disclose ***retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with a second user for introduction to the first user.***

Thus, no matter how the teachings of Refuah and Julliard are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest at least the search means and retrieval means of Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of Refuah and Julliard.

Independent Claims 11, 21, 31, and 32, although differing in scope and/or statutory class, patentably define over Refuah and Julliard at least for reasons analogous to the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 11, 21, 31, and 32 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of Refuah and Julliard.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 21, 31, and 32 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over Refuah and Julliard.

The present amendment also sets forth new Claims 34-38 for examination on the merits. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that these more detailed features are not disclosed or suggested by Refuah and Julliard.

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<sup>4</sup> See Julliard, paragraphs [0005] and [0007].

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

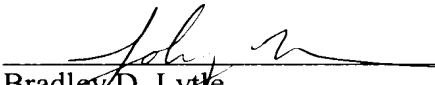
Respectfully submitted,

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